



The project addresses the problem of combined and forced marriages of girls aged between 9 and 15 in Roma communities in Italy, Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia and Austria

12 January 2016 – 12 June 2017

Very young Roma girls, objects of the combined marriages, are the tragic victims of this situation: early marriages are a violence both physical and psychological on these little girls, a violence that produces social exclusion of the children and later girl and women, low education, health risks, early motherhood, poor ability to self-determination and inclusion in the workforce. This kind of “marriage” is largely diffused among Roma communities, and the phenomenon is growing due to the economic crisis. The forced child marriage is not present as a problematic issue in National Strategies for Roma inclusion and the real dimension of the problem is not well known: among Roma, marriages are often not declared and the number is largely underestimated.

Given the dimension and the relevance of the problem, the main need that this project addresses is to increase the capacity of the institutions and of civil society to contrast early marriages, which are a harsh violation of fundamental children’s rights.

OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the project is to increase the effectiveness of the forced child marriages contrast capacity at EU and at national level. We work to build

- **a new awareness in institutions and in civil society organizations** about the dimension and severity of the problem and the need to insert it as a transversal priority issue in European and national Roma inclusion policies and programs;
- **a cultural change** in the attitude towards the child marriage in Roma families and in mainstream stakeholders.

ACTIVITIES

The project works in parallel on two levels and aims to connect them through information sharing and rallying support and interest.

Community work in Italy, Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia and Austria raises the awareness of Roma families and provides information on physical and psychological risks and economic impact arising from early marriage. The work is based on informal meetings, support to schooling of Roma girls, theatrical performances, movies and progressive role models.

Practical and policy recommendations on European, national and local level will be developed on the basis of methods and analyses stemming from community work and processed into the Red Notebook, final project output.

The partnership

The project partnership is based on organizations of Roma women with extensive experience in both policy and community work as regards Roma integration. This gender specificity is an element of strength and excellence of the partnership that binds together Roma women activists in a courageous stepping out on the European civil society as a whole.



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Forumul Femeilor Rome din Romania (Romania)
LIDER (Bulgaria)
Udruga žena Romkinja “Romsko Srce” (Croatia)
Papusza (Austria)
Romni Onlus (Italy)
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